THE UNFPA MAGAZINE

POPULI

VOL. 22, NO. 3

MARCH 1995

Property Rights = Women's Rights = Human Rights

The Frustrations of Economics

Readership Survey: Tell us what you think of POPULI

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POPULI

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Count women in, not out **11**
Mainstream economics today is incapable of addressing the economies of the poor, most of whom are women, writes **Marja-Liisa Swantz**, a visiting fellow at the United Nations University's World Institute for Development Economics Research. No country can isolate itself from the global economic system, but by conforming to the economic logic of the powerful, the economically weak lose the advantage of being small and acting small. Villagers and the urban poor cannot organize their lives in response to distant world centres; they can live only by and within their own means. She says economies should be developed with more space and thought given to the local economic networks in which the poor are the most active players.

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Crime's Punishment

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women takes effect this month. Adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) last June, the Convention is being heralded in the press as the first international legal instrument acknowledging the right of women to live without fear of violence. It condemns physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women, whether within or outside the family. Under its terms, each OAS member—Caribbean and Latin American countries and the United States—is required to create the legal basis for investigating violence against women and convicting its perpetrators.

Family matter? Federal matter!

When Christopher Bailey beat his wife, tossed her into the trunk of his car and drove from their home in West Virginia through several other states in January, he became the first person in America to be charged under the new Violence Against Women Act. He now faces the possibility of 20 years to life in jail. The landmark federal crime bill for women, signed into law last September, has transformed domestic violence—a crime once dismissed by local police as a family matter—into a federal offense carrying the weight of prosecution and stiffer sentences at the hands of federal authorities. The bill also provides for programs to combat violence against women and to teach lawmakers and enforcers about the need to treat domestic violence as a serious crime. New civil rights provisions allow women to sue attackers if they can prove the crime occurred because of gender, and money has been allocated for building and staffing more shelters for abused women. Such services are badly needed, according to Trudi Baldwin, communication director of the non-governmental organization Victim Services. Last year in New York state alone, "women were turned away from shelters 11,000 times because there was no room," she said.

But the Act's funding could be in jeopardy. The legislation was enacted to be funded at US$1.62 billion over the next six years. Although it is considered unlikely that greater legal protection will be gutted by the new, more conservative United States Congress, the Act's supporters say they are worried that funding could be cut by lawmakers preaching fiscal austerity. Women's advocates are promising to fight back, however. Among them is National Organization of Women President Patricia Ireland, who vowed to mobilize "record numbers" of voters in the 1996 elections, to defeat conservatives who undermine the Act. Provisions of the legislation that are not directly tied to funding should be less vulnerable, observers say. These include increased legal protection for immigrant women married to legal residents. They will now be allowed to petition for citizenship if they've been in the United States for three years and are the victims of domestic abuse.

-Marsha Talcin/WFS

Storming Divorce Court, Storming Parliament

Tanzanian women are being urged to assert their property rights in court and to run for parliament in multi-party elections scheduled for October, according to local press reports. Many women lose their assets during divorce proceedings because, although they buy property and other assets, they do not register these in their own names, according to Evod Mmanda, a lawyer with the Tanzania Legal Aid Scheme for Women. The non-governmental Scheme runs workshops to inform women of their rights and provides free legal representation to women who need it. "Men always challenge their partners, saying their wives own nothing in their home," Scheme lawyer Monica Mhoja told the Tanzanian newspaper *The Guardian*. For their part, she added, women often are unaware that everything earned in marriage belongs to both husband and wife.

In related news, Tanzania Women's Organization chairperson Anna Abdallah is calling on "women with leadership qualities" to run for parliament in October's elections, according to a report in the *Daily News* of Tanzania. Abdallah is calling on women in the ruling and opposition parties to put pressure on their leaders to appoint women to positions within each party, and is urging them to cross party lines to discuss and seek solutions to problems facing women.

Costa Rican Focus

The Costa Rican government is pursuing a more holistic approach to population programming in light of last September's International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Inter Press Service reports from San José. The focus of the national population and development programme is changing, taking gender issues and the needs of adolescents in account in redesigning the country's reproductive health care services and social security system. Government officials report that the National Population Commission has been abolished, its responsibilities incorporated into the work of social-sector ministries and government agencies. Government officials say they hope these measures will help meet the health needs of the country's women and adolescents, improve overall well-being, and slow the rate of population growth from the current 2.3 per cent a year, to 2.0 per cent a year by decade's end. At this rate the national population, currently estimated at 3.2 million,

would double by the year 2017. The average Costa Rican woman has three children, and half the population is thought to be younger than 20.

Vietnamese Trained

More than 11,000 people have been trained to help implement a family planning project in seven key cities and provinces in Viet Nam, according to a Voice of Viet Nam radio report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The US$4 million project,which aims to bring family planning services to 171 communes in northern, southern, and central Viet Nam, is being funded jointly by the government, the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, and UNFPA. The government intends to slow population growth to 2.2 per cent a year in 1995, from 2.8 per cent last year, and to prevent the national population from exceeding 75 million people this year, according to Vietnamese radio.

Maternal Deaths Doubled

The Egyptian health ministry has put the number of Egyptian women who die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth at twice the official maternal mortality report, Agence France Presse reports from Cairo. "The national maternal mortality ratio is 174 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births," the ministry stated in a report prepared for International Women's Day (8 March). "This figure is considerably higher than the official figure," set by the central statistics office at 80 maternal deaths for every 100,000 births. Some United Nations reports suggested the rate was as high as 300 in 1988. Most maternal deaths occur during or after childbirth. Some 12 per cent occur in the first 28 weeks of pregnancy and 13.2 per cent in the late stages. In as many as 92.5 per cent of cases, death could have been avoided. Almost half are caused by medical errors during childbirth, with another 42.3 per cent resulting from lack of or delayed prenatal care; these deaths could have been halved had proper prenatal check-ups been conducted. Most Egyptian women give birth at home and seek medical care only if they perceive a problem with their pregnancy. Medical equipment and medicines are not considered in short supply, although shortages of blood are blamed for up to 6 per cent of maternal deaths. The health ministry report calls for improved medical training and better contact between health service providers and pregnant women and their families.

Tolerate Each Other

This is the International Year for Tolerance. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is organizing a series of regional and international meetings to promote "the spirit of open-mindedness, cooperation, and peace necessary in an increasingly interdependent world community," according to the UN newsletter *Development Update*. For more information, contact: UNESCO/Year for Tolerance Secretariat, Room B2.29B, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France. Telephone: 33-1-45-68-3831.

Upcoming Events

- 6-12 March, Copenhagen, Denmark: World Summit for Social Development and NGO Forum '95.
- 8 March, Worldwide: International Women's Day.
- 13-24 March, UN Headquarters, New York: Commission on the Status of Women.
- 11-28 April, UN Headquarters, New York: Commission on Sustainable Development.
- 24 April-5 May, Nairobi, Kenya: Second Preparatory Committee meeting for Habitat II (the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, also known as the "City Summit," scheduled for Istanbul, Turkey in 1996). See related item in this month's "Resources," pages 14-15.
- 3-5 May, Washington, DC, USA: GEF (Global Environment Facility) Council.
- 5 June, Pretoria, South Africa: Main observance of World Environment Day, the theme of which will be "We the Peoples: United for a Better World."
- 11 July, Worldwide: World Population Day.
- 4-15 September, Beijing, China: Fourth World Conference on Women, the theme of which will be "Action for Equality, Development, and Peace."

International Women's Day

Rights Denied

"Few countries treat their women as well as their men," according to the human rights group Amnesty International, which launched a report and campaign titled *It's About Time: Human Rights Are Women's Right* to coincide with International Women's Day (8 March).

Indeed, "human rights violations against women are rampant, partly because they remain largely hidden," according to the report, which describes women as "the invisible victims of the 1990s." These violations, it states, include domestic violence, genital mutilation, and forced prostitution.

Women and their children, the report states, make up most of the casualties of war, most of the world's refugees and displaced people, and most of the world's poor.

During wars, women are often the targets of reprisal killings and are singled out for rape and sexual assault.

Women fleeing conflicts make up some 80 per cent of the world's refugee population, by Amnesty's estimate, and often must surrender "sexual favours" to border guards and security forces in return for safe passage.

United Nations

Political threat?

The report points out that, as lawyers, political activists, and trade union organizers, women are imprisoned, tortured, or killed not because of their gender but because they are seen as a political threat to governments. It adds, however, that as women, they are often subjected to "particularly vile" forms of harassment and torture.

Deep-rooted discrimination against women helps ensure that violations of their human rights are not dealt with in public debate. Women are raped while in custody, forced to take virginity tests by police or immigration officials, flogged for violating dress codes, and risk being stoned to death for so-called sexual offenses.

"So far, governments have more or less ignored human rights violations against women," the report charges, adding that states have "sometimes effectively given a green light to torture or rape by their police or soldiers." It proposes a 15-point plan to promote and protect women's human rights. Among other things, it calls on:

- the Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled for Beijing this September, to "formally recognize government responsibility for all human rights violations against women by their forces...and propose concrete action for promoting and preventing violations";
- individual governments to "safeguard the rights of women during armed conflict, and stop rape, sexual abuse, and other torture or ill-treatment by government agents"; and
- governments to end "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions of women and end "persecution of family connections."

An Amnesty statement alludes to the "dramatic growth" over the past 20 years in the number of organizations campaigning for women's rights, and pays tribute to women struggling in political opposition movements and as trade unionists, lawyers, and community and human rights activists. "The spirit of their activism is captured by Dr. Manorami Saravanamuttu, the mother of a journalist abducted and killed in Sri Lanka in 1990," the statement reads. "Even though she was told that she would also be killed if she spoke out, Dr. Manorami has played a leading role in a mass movement of 25,000 mothers of Sri Lanka's 'disappeared.'"

The statement continues: "'They expect you to curl up in a corner and die of fear,' she said in a 1991 interview. 'The women are saying "We are going mad with grief at home alone." Now at least we are doing something.'"

Despite such examples and legislative moves to bring about gender equity and equality, gender discrimination remains an international reality, the report maintains. "While women are under-represented in national and international decision-making structures, they are over-represented among the victims of rights abuse."

1995 Population Award

Eyeing the prize

An organization fighting to eradicate female genital mutilation and other traditions harmful to women and children will share this year's United Nations Population Award with the Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children and Halfdan Mahler each will receive a diploma, a gold medal, and the sum of US$12,500 at a ceremony later this year, according to Dutch Ambassador Nicolaas H. Biegman, who chairs the Committee of the United Nations Population Award. The Committee presents the annual award to individuals and institutions deemed to have made outstanding contributions to increasing the awareness of population problems and to their solutions.

The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, a non-governmental organization based in Ethiopia, was chosen for its efforts to create the social, cultural, and public health conditions that allow women to exercise their reproductive rights, including the use of contraception. It was founded in 1984 to fight traditional practices which are harmful to the health of women and children, especially female genital mutilation. Since its founding, it has set up national committees in 23 African countries. The national committees have sponsored education workshops, media talks, and training for nurses and traditional birth attendants.

The Inter-African Committee conducts research and programmes to combat other harmful traditional practices relating to child delivery, social and nutritional taboos, the forced feeding of women, early childhood marriages, and teenage pregnancy. The organization also promotes traditional practices such as prolonged breast-feeding and baby massage which are beneficial to the health of women and children.

Dr. Mahler was chosen for his distinguished career in public health, reproductive health, family planning, and global population issues. Between 1973 and 1988, he served as Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO). Since 1989, he has been Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. At WHO, he established the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction. The programme has mobilized scientists and health professionals to help developing countries meet the health needs of their populations, particularly in the field of fertility regulation. Under his leadership, WHO promoted the concept of primary health care with family planning and reproductive health as important components.

As IPPF Secretary-General, Dr. Mahler is credited with making a significant contribution to increasing public awareness of health and population questions. He played an important role in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and in its preparatory meetings, and has helped to shape the new global consensus which emerged from those meetings.

The Committee of the United Nations Population Award is made up of representatives of 10 UN member states elected by the Economic and Social Council for a term of three years. The current members are Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Japan, Netherlands, Philippines, and Zaire. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik serve as ex-officio members. In addition, five eminent individuals serve as honorary advisors for a renewable term of three years.

There were 11 nominations for the 1995 Population Award, seven individuals and four institutions. Nominations can be made by governments of member states, intergovernmental organizations engaged in population-related work, population-related non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the UN, university professors of population or population studies, heads of population-related institutions, and past laureates.

Commission on Population and Development

Retooling the machinery

The United Nations system's efforts to retool its population machinery in line with the International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action entered a new phase last month, at the first session of the newly-renamed United Nations Commission on Population and Development.

The Commission is positioning itself to take charge of reviewing follow-up to and implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo last September.

Set up as the United Nations Population Commission by the UN General Assembly, the Commission's purpose has been to assist the UN Economic and Social Council, review countries' population experiences, and oversee the UN's population research wing, the Population Division of the UN Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. It was called the Population Commission until the General Assembly renamed it in light of the consensus reached at the Cairo conference, that population and sustainable development are intimately and inexorably intertwined.

The Commission's mandate now includes advising the Economic and Social Council on national, regional, and global implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Described in official press releases as "newly revitalized," the Commission on 2 March ended the last of its biennial sessions—from 1996, it will meet every year—by adopting a report to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

The report proposes that the Commission be given primary responsibility for monitoring follow-up to the Cairo conference and should report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. It further proposes that the UN Secretary-General's Inter-Agency Task Force on ICPD implementation should become a permanent body and, in turn, should report to the Commission. The task force was set up by ICPD Secretary-General and UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik, at the request of UN Development Programme Administrator James Gustave Speth. Its task is to coordinate UN development agencies' implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

In trying to fulfil its new mandate, the Commission might benefit from an infusion of new blood. Its report asks the Economic and Social Council to consider opening the body for the first time to policy-makers, inter- and non-governmental organizations, and individual experts.

By its proposed terms of reference, the Commission would advise the Economic and Social Council on such matters as population issues and trends, the latest efforts to integrate population and development strategies, and the provision of population assistance to developing countries on request and, as a temporary measure, to countries with economies in transition.

In monitoring implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, the Commission would keep abreast of specific topics and programme areas and conduct an overall review and appraisal every five years. It would also take a regular look at the financial resources and funding mechanisms used to achieve the Programme of Action's goals.

It proposes reviewing:

- reproductive rights, reproductive health, and population information, education, and communication in 1996;
- international migration and development, gender issues, and the family in 1997;
- health, mortality, and development as well as gender and age in 1998; and
- population growth, structure, and distribution and their effect on sustained economic growth and sustainable development, as well as education in 1999.

In addition, the Commission's 1999 session would undertake the first quinquennial appraisal of implementation of the entire ICPD Programme of Action.

The question of funding will be of particular interest to industrialized and developing countries alike. After the Cairo conference, the Group of 77 bloc of developing countries warned that the ICPD would prove an exercise in futility if the international community failed to come up with sufficient funding to implement the Programme of Action.

The document estimates the cost of meeting the basic needs of developing countries and economies in transition as laid out in its 16 chapters will amount to US$17 billion in the year 2000, rising to US$21.7 billion in 2015. Almost two thirds of the money is expected to be raised by the developing countries themselves. The remaining third is supposed to come from "donors" and international agencies.

Migration

"Concrete measures"

By most estimates, more than 125 million people uprooted themselves last year, more than enough to warrant "concrete measures" to deal with migration, according toRobert Paiva, director for planning, research, and evaluation at the Geneva-based International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Industrialized countries could target development assistance to the countries from which most migrants arrive so as to improve infrastructure and create job opportunities there, Paiva said. For their part, migrants' countries of origin should promote and strengthen democracy and respect for human rights, so as to remove some of the motivation for leaving.

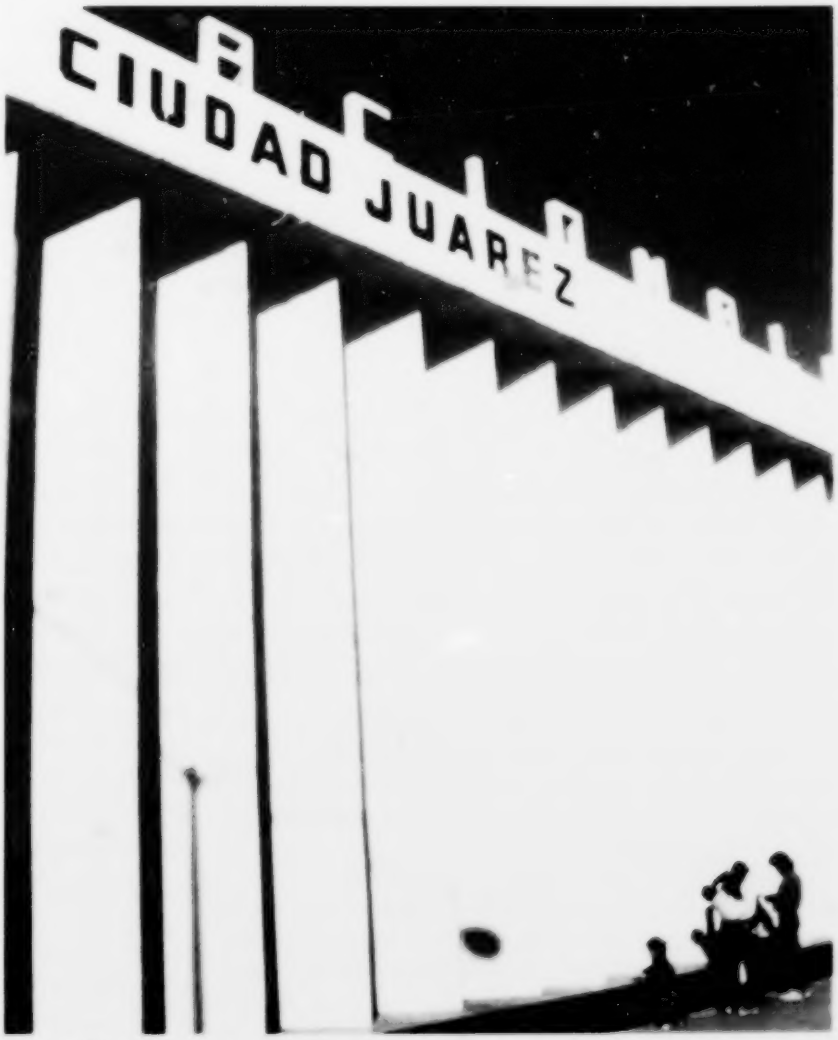
Speaking in New York at last month's session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, Paiva said that in order for migration to be orderly, sustainable development must be achieved in the countries migrants are leaving—something to bear in mind when drawing up development strategies and trade policies. In particular, protectionist policies limiting the access of products made in developing countries to international markets, disincentives to foreign investment, and cuts in development assistance tend to increase migration from developing to industrialized countries. Likewise, he said, people feel compelled to leave their homelands when their human rights are denied.

Paiva called for effective policies and measures to control illegal migration and reduce its destabilizing effect on societies. At the same time, however, he called for "humane regimes" for regular migration. Opportunities for legal migration must be increased, he said, citing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The document contains a number of recommendations to deal with such matters as the root causes of migration; the reintegration of migrants who return to their homelands; protecting migrants against xenophobia and racism; and trafficking in migrants, including for prostitution.

Last year, IOM Director-General James Purcell noted that the ICPD Programme of Action asserts the "vital importance" of family reunification, a touchy subject in sending and receiving countries.

IOM officials have expressed concern that structural adjustment programmes, in their rush to set up free-market systems throughout the developing world, are creating often brutal economic "gaps" and spurring migration.

In general, Purcell said, migrants need to be dealt with not as a problem to be shut out, but as "messengers of a failure in our society."



Vivian Moos

Agents of destabilization?

Property Rights = Women's Rights

Bina Agarwal

interviewed by Gretchen Sidhu

Earlier this year, representatives from Indian non-governmental organizations conducted a workshop on "Women, Livelihoods, and Economic Empowerment" (see POPULI, February 1995). Many speakers said that women, in their struggle to survive, negotiate from a position of weakness when asking that their basic needs—including health and reproductive health, education, and child care—be met. A major part of the problem is that issues such as domestic violence or health needs are considered household issues, and are relegated to the bottom of the political agenda. Yet, rural women, in particular, have always identified control and use of natural resources as a priority.

This month sees the publication in India of *A Field of One's Own*, by Bina Agarwal, professor of economics at the Institute of Economic Growth at the University of Delhi. In her book, she argues that the most important factor slowing the progress of South Asian women is their lack of property rights. Agarwal has written extensively on poverty and inequality, as well as on rural development and environmental issues. "To talk about redistributing land cuts at the very basis of class and gender relations," she says. "Land means a woman has control over her susbistence."

GRETCHEN SIDHU: What do South Asian women want?

BINA AGARWAL: If you talk to poor women, as in Rajasthan and Bihar, and offer them a list of options that includes employment and land, they always say, "We want arable land. All the rest is useless."

SIDHU: Why?

AGARWAL: Land-owning households have a lower risk of poverty. It also empowers women to have the same access to property as men. Look at the Chinese experience in the late 1940s, when women began registering land in their own names. This was the first time they had a sense of self. They felt they could leave unhappy marriages and fend for themselves. One can argue that if women are earning, they have economic resources and it makes a difference. But land has a very special place because it provides not just economic security, but social status and political power.

SIDHU: What happens when women do not have property rights?

AGARWAL: If the man has land and the woman does not, it reduces the woman's power in the household. Even in well-off rural homes, a woman may be left destitute if she is widowed or deserted by her husband. In the Bodhgaya movement in Bihar in the late 1970s, poor peasant men and women launched a land rights campaign. At the end, women in some villages received land, in others they did not. Where they did not, gender relations wors-

Gretchen Sidhu is a correspondent for Women's Feature Service.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF

POPULI

Dear Reader,

Since it appeared in 1974, POPULI has evolved to meet the needs of its readers. We began as a newsletter and became, by the late 1970s, a quarterly journal of official and scholarly material in English. In 1992, we relaunched POPULI as a news magazine published monthly, with bimonthly issues in December/January and July/August, in English, French, and Spanish.

Since our relaunch, we have approached our subject from positions as varied as your concerns: sexuality and contraception, employment and migration, human rights and the distribution of power between the sexes and classes. Our purpose has been to explore the issues and present a broad range of opinions, and not merely to promote the work of UNFPA. (Since 1993, we have sought to cover the Fund's programme activities in a quarterly supplement, *Dispatches*.) We think the strategy has paid off: in the past three years, subscriptions have more than doubled—they increased 92 per cent in 1993 alone.

We have been encouraged not only by the growth in subscriptions, but by the interest and appreciation many of you have expressed by writing to us. As we round out our first three years as a news magazine, we would like to take a more systematic look at what we are doing, and what you think of us. To this end, we would be grateful if you would take the time to fill out and return this questionnaire within two weeks of receiving it.

Thank you for your continued interest in POPULI.

With best wishes,
The editor and staff
POPULI

POPULI Readership Survey

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6. What subjects interest you?	Very Interested	Interested	Not Interested
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J.O. Bradford/WFP

Who does the work, who tips the scales?

ened. Women reported a greater tendency for husbands to be abusive and to say "get out of the house" in cases of family conflict.

SIDHU: In your book you say that the process of acqu'ring land rights is almost as important as the rights themselves.

AGARWAL: Land is such a major form of property, and there are such strong vested interests in keeping the system intact, that women will not achieve effective rights without a major struggle. They need a collective effort, which will not be easy. Who is going to look after the children, who will take care of the household chores while women go off to meetings? It's not an issue that is on the political agenda, or even something that's socially accepted. There will be administrative barriers, a lack of resources, and intense social pressures to give up their claims. If they are able to move forward, it will be a transformative experience.

Even after the Green Revolution, smaller farms continued to have higher output than larger ones.

SIDHU: Has any progress been made?

AGARWAL: There have been one or two pockets of activity, in Maharashtra and Bihar. But it hasn't spread beyond, or to the national level. It also hasn't been taken up as a central issue by grassroots organizations in South Asia as a whole.

SIDHU: What about national policy?

AGARWAL: Land rights for women has been an issue that has been seriously neglected. If you look at the manifestos of all the political parties in India you will find that although education and employment for women are important, land rights receives little notice. You see it in the programme of the Congress Party and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal. The CPI(M) manifesto, for example, talks about ensuring that women have equal rights in land. But a major effort to register tenants focused on men, except in the case of a few widow-headed households.

SIDHU: Why do political parties avoid the issue?

AGARWAL: To talk about redistributing land cuts at the very basis of class and gender relations. I made a presentation in 1989 at the Indian Planning Commission on land reform. The then Minister of Agriculture said, "Are you suggesting women should be given rights in land? What do women want, to break up the family?" India's 1956 Hindu Succession Act,

which attempted to bring some equality into inheritance, was surrounded by intense debate. President Rajendra Prasad initially said he would withhold his consent, which could have led to a Constitutional crisis. It is an issue that has raised a lot of hostile reactions because the assumption is that the conflicts that already exist over property between households will enter the household itself.

"Are you suggesting women should be given rights in land? What do women want, to break up the family?"

SIDHU: Won't land redistribution fragment farms?

AGARWAL: There are those who say that it will, and reduce productivity. But even after the Green Revolution, small-size farms continued to have higher output than large ones. There is no reason to expect that if women get land there is going to be a decline in productivity. People also say there isn't enough land to go around. We need to look at land not as providing the sole source of income because clearly there isn't enough. One has to think of a small plot not just in terms of how much you can grow on it, but also whether or not it can provide a strong supplementary base that complements other sources of income.

SIDHU: Why isn't it enough to offer women more employment options?

AGARWAL: Employment is important, but cannot substitute for rights in land. You can do a variety of things with land. You can grow crops, or plant trees, or keep a buffalo. In terms of employment, there is no guarantee. Land means a woman has control over her subsistence.

SIDHU: Doesn't dowry compensate for lack of inheritance?

AGARWAL: Dowry is at the discretion of the family. It cannot be demanded as a legal right, unlike inheritance. It is not under a woman's control, and she almost always receives moveable goods like cash or jewellery that are passed on to the in-laws. In any case, dowry is illegal.

SIDHU: How do land rights fit into the larger discussion on women and development?

AGARWAL: Land rights needs to be the most important issue. Other issues, like education, are complementary. But land ownership could make a critical difference in the lives of millions of rural women.

UN/C Sivaram

Agarwal: Land ownership needs to be the most important issue. Other issues, like education, are complementary.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS:

Count women in, not out

by Marja-Liisa Swantz

Mainstream economics today is incapable of addressing the economies of the poor, most of whom are women.

While working in sub-Saharan Africa, I have discovered that women's socio-economic behaviour does not conform to traditional economic theories. I have been confronted with the need for an economic theory which can encompass the whole economy and all its diverse motivations. My frustration with accepted analytical tools is shared by others trying to shed light on women's livelihoods and socio-economic networks. We need fresh ways of gathering data and new, broader definitions of work. Measurements of employment and income alone cannot tell us what motivates women to make their particular economic decisions or how they form and operate networks.

We need fresh ways of gathering data and new, broader definitions of work.

Women's economic activity has increased in Africa in response to the economic pressures of the past decade, but such activity is often in the "informal" sector and remains on a small scale. Traditional economic surveys include only a handful of women because of the informal nature of women's businesses. Nonetheless, women's critical role in sustaining modern African livelihood must be recognized, understood, and brought to bear on official development strategies.

The problem with traditional economics is that it regards women's small-scale economic activity as an inefficient way of doing business. It uses concepts in gathering and analysing data that serve to depreciate women's economic activity and neglect their contribution to the informal economy. In point of fact, the women's economy has its own rules, relations, and support systems which help propel the larger economy. Sustained livelihood cannot be narrowed to purely economic functions in any society, even less in societies that do not fully provide organized social services or maintain a well-developed infrastructure.

In Africa, women's reproductive work and most of their productive work takes place outside the mainstream economic framework, which only measures transactions in terms of their monetary value. In fact, most women's work is done at home. Official accounting of women's work is hampered by preconceptions about what makes an enterprise. In surveys, for example, "housework" is specifically excluded from the category of "work." Thus excluded are all activities ranging from production and food processing to giving birth, nurturing, and raising children.

Motives other than economic gain drive many women's work lives, which combine enterprise and service. There is no need to argue about the degree of altruism or about the fundamental reasons for this. Suffice it to say, even the industrialized economies have not been able to transfer household service functions to the formal economy, let alone put a price on them. There is a difference in scale and kind between women's and men's informal means. Women must combine their income-earning activities with their domestic and social duties,

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which inhibit them from fully devoting themselves to their enterprises. Women work in groups. They establish networks and feel responsible for providing services to others when they succeed in their own work, however small their profits may be. Far more often than men, women express social concerns through their economic activities by thus combining business and service.

Research in urban and rural areas shows that women foster many social links which they also use to procure supplies or participate in markets. They communicate across ethnic and tribal lines and form savings clubs with other women whom they trust. Their social relationships of recognized mutual responsibility and service are akin to social banking or putting money into an insurance company. The difference is, this type of activity usually cannot be counted in terms of its cash value.

Another reason women's innovative and enterprising ideas and activities remain seemingly small is the sharing function of the group. Almost invariably, women report enlarging their businesses by training younger women and helping them start their own businesses in a different place. More often than not, a woman's business grows sideways, multiplying in a diffuse way rather than expanding on its own base. Hardly the accepted image of the businessman.

The economic doctrines to which we are still attached remain silent on home-based and other "non-productive" and "informal" activities.

Indeed, the term "entrepreneur" may be unsuitable to describe such women if it is applied in the sense ascribed to it by economics textbooks. The traditional entrepreneur is an industrial figure out to maximize productivity, profit, and individual distinction. The entrepreneur's is an economy which has so far been dominated by men who participate little in regenerating life and reproducing societies, managing households and serving communities. This partly explains why the economic doctrines to which we are still attached remain silent with respect to home-based and other so-called "non-productive" and "informal" activities.

For many women, the informal economy has offered new opportunities. It has expanded decision-making powers at home, fostered new skills, and helped them gain self-confidence in business and public life. It is important to note that women

Ricardo Rongel/CFI

Hard work, or an "informal" activity?

Carlos Cardoso/CFF

What's happening on Wall Street?

have increasingly combined social service with their own income-earning efforts much as, earlier, they combined agricultural work with the care of their extended families and neighbours. The informal economy has also meant a heavier workload for women, however—longer hours and poorer conditions than what regulated formal employment or state-sponsored social services can potentially offer.

The complexity of women's daily struggle to balance their family, social, and economic responsibilities requires great flexibility. Women's apparent hesitance to rise to positions of power and influence must not be looked upon only as timidness to take over so-called male responsibilities. It must be seen as a statement of their preferences under existing, hostile conditions.

When the women's informal social service structure breaks down and individual women's workloads exceed their physical and mental capacity, social upheavals dislocate communities and further disrupt community services. Only then can society at large understand the real cost of sustaining life: social disintegration, street children, increased prostitution, and crime.

Yet, women's contributions to sustaining and regenerating societies has been a neglected component in development, whether in terms of national or family economy, national or local culture, or politics. Viewing development strictly as economic growth and technical progress is not only foreign to women's way of looking at life, it eventually negates life itself. I believe that the day's big issues—poverty, population, and production—relate to the basic question of how biological, social, and material life can be sustained. From the people's point of view, it is all about ensuring the livelihood of one's community and the continuity of the living world.

The poor cannot organize their lives in response to distant world centres.

While no country can isolate itself from the global economic system and organize its economy independently of the rest of the world, it is also true that by conforming to the economic logic of the powerful, the economically weak lose the advantage of being small and acting small. Villagers and the urban poor cannot organize their lives in response to distant world centres; they can live only by and within their own means. Economies should be developed with more space and thought given to the local economic networks in which the poor—chiefly, women—are the most active players.

Behind the Clichés

"Each decade has brought with it its own cure for the ills of underdevelopment but none has achieved what it hoped for," according to Chilean Ambassador Juan Somavia, who chaired the preparatory committee for the World Summit for Social Development. "Too often, assumptions are made about what the poor want or their views are interpreted to such a point that they bear little relationship to the people's priorities." Somavia's comments are made in the preface to *Let the Dawn Come—Social development: Looking behind the clichés*, a book that sets out to present case-studies showing "the efforts of people to define their own development priorities and act on them," according to the publisher, Panos London. In India, landless labourers have united to protest unemployment, low wages, and abuse by powerful elites while setting up their own community-based savings and loans programmes. In neighbouring Bangladesh, the landless poor are demanding the return of communal lands seized by rural elites. In Uganda, women lawyers are informing rural women of their legal rights. In Guatemala, Maya-Quiche women with among the highest illiteracy rates in Latin America have set up businesses and industries with the help of indigenous community organizations. In Zimbabwe, rural communities are banding together to fight the effects of drought, the unequal distribution of land, and the government's economic structural adjustment programme. "If the governments at the Social Summit [held this month in Copenhagen] do not address factors such as debt, trade, women's empowerment, and structural economic change, then [these] will be isolated efforts," says Heather Budge-Reid, director of information at Panos. For more information, contact: Panos London, 9 White Lion Street, London N1 9PD, UK. Telephone: (071) 278-1111. Fax: (071) 278-0345. E-mail: <panoslondon@gn.apc.org>.

New Perspectives

"The consensus [at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)] in Cairo was that no single solution on its own is likely to produce the changes needed to slow population growth and mitigate the effects of rapid population growth on society....the ICPD has provided the world community with an abundance of information about the challenges to be faced, a framework for viewing these challenges, and a range of policy responses to pursue." This, according to Lori S. Ashford, author of "New Perspectives on Population: Lessons from Cairo," the latest *Population Bulletin* from the United States-based Population Reference Bureau. Ashford sets out to examine the broader policies called for by the Cairo Programme of Action—among them, "responsible" economic development, the education and empowerment of women, and high-quality health care, including family planning services—and some of the constraints to achieving the goals adopted at Cairo. For more information, contact: Population Reference Bureau, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC, 20009-5728, USA. Telephone: (202) 483-1100.

Sterilization Guides

Female Sterilization: What health workers need to know and *Vasectomy: What health workers need to know*, set out to provide health workers with a succinct and simple compilation of "the most current information on these topics" in the hope that this "will be useful in providing high quality services to all clients." The guides, published by the World Health Organization with support from UNFPA, are prototypes that may be adapted for use by service providers at various levels. For more information, contact: Unit of Family Planning and Population, Division of Family Health, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

Economies of Exclusion

Rapid economic change in the world economy offers new possibilities for economic development. Yet, the multitude of poor people often find themselves left out of such bursts of economic development as occur. As technologies and demographics reshape economies, the underclass finds its skills increasingly peripheral to the urban economy into which it is drawn. Academic Scott Sernau sets out to explore "the daunting task before Mexico in raising the living standards of its people," in *Economies of Exclusion: Underclass Poverty and Labor Market Change in Mexico*. Sernau teaches Social Stratification and International Development at Indiana University in the United States, and Mexican Society and Culture in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Published in hardback, priced at US$55.00, by: Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007, USA. Credit card orders, call: (800) 225-5800.

Free Papers

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has launched two new series of publica-

tions, both of which are available free of charge. UNRISD Briefing Papers set out to outline selected social problems and possible policies to deal with them. UNRISD Occasional Papers aim to provide more in-depth analysis of selected topics. The briefing papers are: *Social Integration: Approaches and Issues; Illicit Drugs: Social Impacts and Policy Responses; Environmental Degradation and Social Integration;* and *Crisis, Adjustment, and Social Change.* The occasional papers include: *Social Safety Nets and Adjustment in Developing Countries; Globalization and Social Integration: Patters and Processes; Is There a Crisis in the Family?; Social Integration: Institutions and Actors; Transnational Corporations: Impediments or Catalysts of Social Development?; The Search for Identity: Ethnicity, Religion, andPolitical Violence; After the Golden Age: The Future of the Welfare State in the New Global Order; Ethnic Diversity and Public Policy: An Overview;* and *Migration; Displacement, and Social Integration.* For more information, contact: The Reference Centre, UNRISD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

Multilingual Software

The Population Council last month announced the release of updated version 11.0 of *Computational Methods for Population Projections,* a computer program that calculates demographic projections. The interactive program is now available in English, French, Spanish, and Turkish and comes with an updated manual which is available in English or Turkish. The program's new features include a page of sample output containing indicators of fertility, mortality, migration, and population growth year by year for the first 15 years of the projection period. Both the software and the manual are available free of charge on the Internet, at: <gopher://gopher.undp.org:70/11/ungophers/popin/popis/software/fivfiv>. The cost of ordering the software and manual from the Population Council is US$25 for individuals and organizations in industrialized countries. They are free of charge to users in developing countries. Those who have earlier versions of FIVFIV software may upgrade to 11.0 at a reduced rate of US$20. To order, contact: Don Bucher at the Population Council in New York. Telephone: (212) 339-0514. Fax: (212) 755-6052. E-mail: <dbucher@ popcouncil.org>. To ask technical questions, contact: Robert Sendek at the Population Council in New York. Telephone: (212) 339-0537. Fax: (212) 755-6052. E-mail: <rsendek@popcouncil.org>.

Municipal Meeting

The Municipality of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) are organizing a conference on Best Practices scheduled for Dubai 2-5 April. It will be "an opportunity for representatives of local authorities, national governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private and professional sectors to share, discuss, and learn from each other's successful practices in tackling some of the world's most pressing shelter and urbanization problems," according Christina Engfeldt, chief of information and external relations at Habitat. "Participants will be able to analyse and evaluate a selection of Best Practices from developed and developing countries and cities and to reflect on how the lessons derived from these case-studies could be adapted to their own situations." For more information, contact: The Dubai International Conference for Habitat II, P.O. Box 67, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Telephone: 971-4-221141. Fax: 971-4-221319. Cable: BALADIYA. Telex: 45688 BALADYA-EM.

Loaded AWEPON

Representatives of some 20 African women's organizations have formed the African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON) in order to provide a forum for discussion, analysis, and dissemination of information about existing economic policies, especially structural adjustment policies, and how they affect women in Africa. AWEPON also aims to articulate women's alternatives to these policies. With regional coordinators in Morocco, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Zimbabwe, the Network's overall coordinator is Julia Mulaha, director of the women's programme at the National Council of Churches of Kenya, P.O. Box 45009, Nairobi, Kenya. Telephone: 254-2-338-211. Fax: 254-2-224-463.

Poster Contest

"Women's Equality: A Gateway to Population" is the theme of this year's UNFPA international poster contest. The contest, first held in 1991, is open to contestants in five age groups: 6-8 years; 9-12 years; 13-15 years; 16-18 years; and over 18 years.The international contest is preceded by a round of national competitions. The winners of the international contest are scheduled to be announced on World Population Day (11 July). For more information, contact your local UNFPA or UNDP (UN Development Programme) office. Members of the immediate families of UNFPA and UNDP staff are not eligible to compete.

Turkish Family Snapshot

The Done Thing

Marriage is almost universal in Turkey. By the time women reach their early thirties, 96 per cent are or have been married; by the end of their reproductive years, only 1 per cent have never been married. But they are marrying later. The median age at first marriage is 20 years among women aged 25-29; among women aged 45-49, it is 18.3.

Planning Families

Turkish women have an average of 2.7 children. If all unwanted births were avoided, they would have an average of 1.8 births. More than two in three currently married women say they do not want to have any more children and 14 per cent say they want to delay their next birth for at least two years. Ninety-nine per cent of married women are familiar with at least one family planning method; more than 95 per cent know about the pill and IUD (intra-uterine device). Some 63 per cent practise contraception; the majority of them use a modern contraceptive. Withdrawal is the single most popular method among currently married women, however, accounting for 26 per cent of contraceptive users. Fifty-five per cent of those who use modern contraceptives rely on public sector service providers, mainly government primary health care centres and pharmacies.

Largely Safe Choices

About 18 in 100 pregnancies end in induced abortions, and the rate has been falling in recent years. The main reasons for having an induced abortion are: the desire to stop childbearing (58 per cent); socio-economic factors (17 per cent); and a physician's recommendation (12 per cent). Eighty-eight per cent of induced abortions are performed within the legal and safe period of pregnancy. Sixty-seven per cent are performed by private physicians; 27 per cent are done in government hospitals. Only 3 per cent are performed in unhealthy conditions.

Careful Deliveries

Three in four deliveries are assisted by a doctor or qualified nurse or midwife, and six in eight babies are born at a health facility. Yet, 37 per cent are born to mothers who received no prenatal care; 58 per cent of women do not receive a tetanus toxoid injection during pregnancy.

Shots for Tots

About two in three children aged 12-23 months have been fully immunized; 89 per cent have been vaccinated against tuberculosis and 78 per cent against measles. Although it is recommended that children be fully vaccinated during their first year, only about 59 per cent of 12-23-month-olds have met the deadline. More than one child in 20 dies before its first birthday.

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)/Macro International, Inc., *Turkey: Demographic and Health Survey 1993 Summary Report*, 1994.

DICTIONARY

Natural Increase

Natural increase is the surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths in a given population during a given period of time. The rate of natural increase is the rate at which a population is increasing (or decreasing) in a given year due to that surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths, and is expressed as a percentage of the base population.

(**Source:** Population Reference Bureau, *Population Handbook*, 2nd edition, 1988.)

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